

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /060 W
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R 271910Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 241
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH
USDOCOSOUTH
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 1756

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, IT, US
SUBJECT: SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADER'S MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR

1. PIER LUIGI ROMITA, SECRETARY OF THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY, INVITED ME TO MEET WITH HIM ON JANUARY 25. ROMITA BEGAN THE MEETING BY ASKING IF I HAD SEEN HIS STATEMENT ON THE STATE DEPARTMENT DECLARATION OF JANUARY 12 REGARDING ITALY. I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD AND THAT WE WERE MOST APPRECIATIVE OF THE BALANCED AND HELPFUL POSITION THAT HE AND HIS PARTY HAD TAKEN ON THE
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STATEMENT. ROMITA COMMENTED THAT THE AMERICAN DECLARATION HAD HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION BY STRENGTHENING THE POSITION OF THE NON-COMMUNIST PARTIES.

2. IN THE COURSE OF OUR FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROMITA SAID THAT HE ANTICIPATED THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

WOULD PROBABLY SUCCEED IN FORMING A NEW GOVERNMENT. HIS OWN PARTY, HE SAID, FAVORED A TWO-PART SOLUTION: (1) THEFORMATION OF A COALITION OF CHRISITIAN DEMOCRATS, REPUBLICANS AND SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, SUPPORTED BY THE SOCIALISTS, COMMUNISTS AND LIBERALS; (2) COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN A "PROGRAMMATIC MAJORITY" IN WHICH THE COMMUNISTS WOULD VOTE IN FAVOR OF A COORDINATED PROGRAM, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT JAORITY.ON THE SECOND POINT ROMITA ADDED THAT THE DISTINCITION BETWEEN A "PROGRAMMATIC MAJORITY" AND A "GOVERMENT MAJORITY" LAY IN THE FACT THAT CERTAIN AREAS SUCH AS FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE WOULD BE OMITTED FROM THE PROGRAM ACCORD.

3. ELABORATING ON THIS FORMULA, ROMITA COMMENTED THA THE COMMUNIST PARTY WOULD NO DOUBT ALSO INSIST ON OBTAINING A VOICE IN THE SELECTION OF MINISTERS AND ON VOTING AFFIRMATIVELY IN THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. I ASKED IF SUCH AN ARRANGMENT WOULD NOT OFFER THE COMMUNISTS A GREAT DEAL. ROMITA AGREED BUT SAID THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE. HE ADDED THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THE PROGRAM ACCORD WORK. THEY HAD FAILED, HE SAID, BECAUSE THEY HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO RESOLVE THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND THIS FAILURE WAS DUE TO THE FACT THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY HAD NOT EXTRACTED ENOUGH FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY LAST JULY IN DEVELOPING THE PROGRAM ACCORD.

4. ROMITA EXPRESSED INTEREST IN VISITING THE UNITED STATES SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE. I AGREED THAT IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO MEET SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND OTHER POLITICAL FIGURES. I OFFERED TO FACILITATE A VISIT BUT WARNED ROMITA THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT FOR HIM WITH THE PRESIDENT. GARDNER

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